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REPORT OF THE AGREEMENT ON THE CONSERVATION OF AFRICAN-EURASIAN MIGRATORY WATERBIRDS (AEWA)

Good progress has been made in the implementation of AEWA over the last 12 months. These are the highlights likely to be of interest to the CMS Standing Committee:

(a) With the addition of two new part-time GS posts and a project-oriented Associate Programme Officer and the decision by the Government of Germany to extend the JPO post, the total number of posts within AEWA is now seven. With the current team we are better able to fulfil the expectations of our Contracting Parties. However, the human resources available are still limited taking into account the large scope of the Agreement.

(b) The decision of MOP3 to adopt our Budget 2006-2008 in Euros was a wise decision. Contrary to the previous triennium we are no longer negatively affected by the loss of purchase power of the US Dollar.

(c) In October 2006 the 7th Meeting of the AEWA Technical Committee took place in Bern, hosted by the Government of Switzerland and the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums (WAZA). The next meeting is scheduled to take place in March 2008 in Kenya. The 5th Meeting of the Standing Committee was held in Bonn, Germany. The next meeting of the Standing Committee, scheduled to take place 13-14 December 2007, had to be postponed to mid 2008 due to lack of resources. In close cooperation with BirdLife International two workshops on sustainable hunting were organised in Tunisia (September 2006) and Jordan (June 2007) to promote sustainable hunting in Mediterranean Third Countries.

(d) To start the logistical arrangements for the 4th Session of the Meeting of Parties the Secretariat paid an official visit to Madagascar. In close cooperation with the host country we decided to change the date for MOP4 to 7-11 September 2008.

(e) Since September 2006 the following Parties have joined AEWA: **Algeria, Czech Republic, Guinea Bissau, Italy and Madagascar.**

(f) In accordance with Resolution 3.9 the Secretariat has begun the process of drafting a Strategic Plan for the Agreement. This plan is based on the existing CMS Strategic Plan, which stresses the important role of the Agreements regarding the implementation of the CMS aims and objectives. A draft for consultation has been submitted to all Contracting Parties and Partner Organisations.

(g) In mid 2007 the CMS Secretariat invited the AEWA Secretariat to participate in an internal meeting to discuss the future development of the Central Asian Flyway (CAF) Agreement. A number of legal and institutional options were discussed and it was agreed that more work should be done on assessing the financial implications of each option identified. It is foreseen that in the coming months CMS and AEWA will work more closely together on CAF.

(h) At MOP3 a proposal to include some seabird species in Annex 2 of AEWA was discussed. Due to the late circulation of this proposal and doubts about the usefulness of the inclusion of seabirds, a final decision

on this issue was postponed to the next MOP. One of the points raised was that seabirds spend most of their life cycle in the pelagic marine environment and face different conservation threats than the current AEWA species. To manage these threats special measures are needed that are probably addressed *inter alia* in the context of fishery bodies, including regional fishery management organisations. Based on the discussion during MOP3 the Technical Committee has reviewed the list of seabirds that might be included in AEWA. The findings are that seabirds, with the exception of Albatrosses and Petrels, are not specifically listed in any conservation treaty. Therefore in the view of the Technical Committee a clear niche exists for AEWA. A concrete proposal to add certain species of seabirds to AEWA will be submitted to MOP4 for adoption. Some species of seabirds e.g. Cape Gannet, African Penguin, King Eider, etc are already included in Annex 2 of the Agreement.

(i) Despite the limited resources available, the AEWA Secretariat has significantly improved a number of its external communication tools since MOP3. For example, the design and usability of the AEWA website has been improved and is now continuously being updated with news and relevant information. An Electronic Newsletter (The AEWA E-Newsletter) is produced entirely in-house and disseminated widely to all AEWA partners and stakeholders by the Secretariat on a regular basis.

(j) World Migratory Bird Day (WMBD) is a joint activity of CMS and AEWA, although our Secretariat takes the lead. The theme for the second World Migratory Bird Day (WMBD) in 2007 was '*Migratory Birds in a Changing Climate*'. This hot political topic has led to much attention for WMBD. The main celebration took place in Madagascar where the Executive Secretary of AEWA was invited by the Minister of Environment to open a Seminar on Climate Change and Migratory Birds as well as to participate at a ceremony to inaugurate a wetland as new Ramsar site. More than 100 WMBD activities took place worldwide in over 60 different countries and were registered on the designated campaign website developed by the AEWA Secretariat: www.worldmigratorybirdday.org. A number of high-impact interviews on the "impact of climate change on migratory birds" were given by both CMS and AEWA officials during and directly following the height of the WMBD campaign.

(k) The AEWA Secretariat has played an active role in the CMS-led Task Force on Avian Influenza and Wild Birds. The AEWA Information Officer has assisted in the production of a number of related communication materials, such as in the development of the designated Task Force website (www.aiweb.info) and the two TF Avian Influenza workshop CD-ROMs.

(l) The AEWA Secretariat has also published the MOP3 Proceedings, a special Newsletter on MOP3, a Russian version of the Special Newsletter on Lead shot, No. 13 and 14 of the Technical Series (Conservation status report and Single Species Action Plan on the Maccua Duck), and a fundraising brochure including 25 of the projects which have been given priority by MOP3.

(m) In 2005 the AEWA Secretariat launched a major revision of the Lesser White-fronted Goose (*Anser erythropus*) SSAP. We hope to be able to present the revised SSAP to MOP4 for approval. The preparation of a SSAP for the Lesser Flamingo began in late September 2006 with an action planning workshop in Nairobi, Kenya. It is also that the revised plan can be submitted to MOP4. Work has also begun on a SSAP for the **Eurasian Spoonbill (*Platalea leucorodia*)**. Finally the SSAP for the Black-tailed Godwit is expected to be ready soon.

(n) The Agreement Secretariat, in coordination with the Technical Committee and the Parties, is preparing five international reviews under the Action Plan:

- 1) reports on status and trends of populations;
- 2) pertinent hunting and trade legislation in each country relating to the species listed in Annex 2 to this Agreement;
- 3) the stage of preparation and implementation of single species action plans;
- 4) re-establishment projects; and
- 5) the status of introduced non-native waterbird species and hybrids thereof.

(o) The implementation of the African-Eurasian Flyways Project started in mid-2006. Since then good progress has been made by the Project Coordination Unit (PCU) based in Wageningen, The Netherlands to subcontract several parts of the project. AEWA has committed itself to provide an amount of US \$ 1.3 million as matching fund to this project. So far more or less US \$ 300,000 has been secured particularly in kind by allocating 50 percent of the time of the AEWA Information Officer (JPO) and also time of the Executive Secretary to the project. In addition to this US \$ 130,000 has been given in cash. This means that an amount of approximately US \$ 860,000 is still missing. The Secretariat is doing its utmost to secure the missing funds. Any support from Contracting Parties would be welcome.

(p) The International Implementation Priorities (IIP) 2006-2008 contain 36 projects. These projects are partly linked to the WOW project. Once the missing funds mentioned above are secured most of them could be implemented. For other projects listed some funds have been received in 2006-2007 in particularly for: implementation of existing single species action plans; development of new single species action plans; guidelines on minimizing/ mitigating the impact of infrastructural (and disturbance related) developments affecting waterbirds; survey work in poorly-known areas; coordination of waterbird ringing schemes, particularly in Africa; and a regional workshop for promotion of the Agreement. Although good progress is being made regarding the implementation of IIP 2006-2008 it is clear that we are dealing with a very ambitious programme. For the full implementation of IIP 2006-2008 an amount of over € 5 million is needed, which is far beyond the resources available.

(q) The Agreement Secretariat has developed a Memorandum of Cooperation with “Oiseaux Migrateurs du Paléarctique Occidental” (OMPO), which confirms the role of OMPO as an AEWA ambassador. The official signing session is planned to be held in November 2007.

(r) The AEWA Secretariat became advisory body of the Steering Committee coordinating the activities of the Great Rift Valley Conservation Initiative. The purpose of this African-driven initiative is the nomination of the Great Rift Valley as a World Heritage Site.

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